DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 239 964 SO 015 243

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TITLE Education and Economics, People's Republic of China, 1983: Document of a Lecturer.
PUB DATE 2 Nov 82
NOTE 5p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Reports - General (140)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Economic Change; *Economic Progress; *Educational Practices; Educational Principles; *Foreign Countries; Government School Relationship; Opinion Papers
IDENTIFIERS *China; PF Project

ABSTRACT

Educational and economic factors in evidence in the People's Republic of China (PRC) that indicate it will become a major power by the year 2000 are described. The factors were observed during a lecture tour from December 1982 to January 1983. Following a description of the lecture tour, four characteristics of the PRC's educational system are presented: (1) the amount of time students devote to school work is approximately double that of public schools in most countries; (2) key schools are used to furnish the best students with the best facilities and the most qualified teachers; (3) an examination process beginning in the fifth grade is used to filter students and track abilities into areas of need and quality; and (4) there is a heavy and increasing concentration on science, mathematics, and foreign languages. Eight facts related to economic growth focus on increasing industrial and agricultural production and on the sixth Five Year Plan (1981-1986). The article concludes by listing five basic trends evident in the PRC in January 1983: a progressive moderate government, increased freedom of movement for foreigners, higher standards of living, improved health and housing conditions, and a desire to improve international relations. (DC)

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EDUCATION AND ECONOMICS, PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, 1983: DOCUMENT OF A LECTURER

China is made up of 22 provinces, 5 autonomous regions and 3 municipalities; thus, China is termed a multinational country. It is a country with 4,000 years of recorded history, the worlds' largest population (1,014.36 million), a coastline of 11,178 miles, an east to west stretch of 3,000 miles and a north to south stretch of 3,300 miles. China is the third largest country in the world in land mass area (USSR and Canada are number one and two). In October of 1981, I spent approximately three weeks in the People's Republic of China visiting seven major cities which covered all the basic geographic regions of China except the far West.

My research interest in the PRC began in 1968 when I was on leave from Montana State University to the University of California at Berkeley. At this time I prepared a comprehensive document comparing all of the Asian educational systems to the systems of the western countries of Europe and North America.

From December 20,1982 to January 7, 1983, I made a second trip to the PRC with my wife Sara. This visit was different from my first in that I was a visiting lecturer conducting higher education inservice studies for Guangxi Institute of Nationalities in Nanning, Guangxi. The lecture series was conducted five days a week for a three week period. A total of 60 clock hours was spent lecturing, with an additional 45 hours of media and question and answers presentation. These lectures were presented to an audience of 150 educators, researchers, psychologists and administrators from 10 provinces and 35 institutions in south China. I was told this was the first time since the present communist government gained control that an American has been invited to lecture in the PRC to a national group of teacher educators.

The professional education lecture series covered the following topics: International Education, American Education, Principles of Education, Educational

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Psychology, Educational Administration, and Lifelong Education. The topics were researched before the trip and complete manuscripts were sent ahead to be translated. The manuscripts are currently being published in Chinese.

An average work day began with a daily lecture from 8-12 a.m. A question and answer session was held in the afternoon from 2:30-4:30. Media presentations in the evening ran from 8:00-9:30 followed by an hour session with the interpreter to prepare for the next day. Study and final preparations for the following day were done from 6:30-7:30 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. to 12:00 am.

Our daily routine was a strenuous one. Six a.m. was time to rise, bathe, shave, dress and exercise before breakfast at seven a.m. We met with the interpreter at 7:30 to get ready for our 8:00-12:00 lecture. Lunch at 12:00 was followed by a walk and a rest and nap from 1:00-2:00. Afternoon question and answer sessions were followed by dinner, a walk, and observation of a sports event. Movies, performances and parties were arranged and attended whenever possible.

A tea party was given in our honor with all the trappings of a festive formal occasion. In return we hosted a more casual American style party for our hosts at the Guangxi Institute for Nationalities.

During my lectures and studies of the People's Republic of China, the rapid growth of industry and education was apparent. The hypothesis that there are four educational factors and some economic factors in evidence in the PRC today that indicate she will be a major world power by the year 2000 will be the main focus of the remainder of this paper.

1. China's school system is in session 6 days a week for 8 hours a day. Homework is assigned for two hours per day and students are expected to complete it. Classes are held eleven months out of each year. This is approximately double the amount of time given to general studies in the public schools in most countries including the United States.

2. Key schools attempt to furnish the best students with the best facilities and the most qualified teachers. Most provinces have only one major key middle school but several key primary schools. The middle school serves as a province wide institution and usually has required board and room for students. Key primary schools usually are near the workplace of the most qualified professionals and/or workers in the province.
3. The examination process is used to filter students and track abilities into areas of need and quality. Serious examinations begin in the fifth grade when students are eligible to be promoted to the middle schools. Also, every year thereafter, examinations are given for annual promotion. Special national examinations are given at the end of eleventh grade to determine eligibility for college and university entrance.
4. Concentration on science, math and foreign languages in the schools in the PRC is heavy and on the increase. Students begin these studies when they enter school at age seven and they are part of the regular curriculum for the greater portion of all eleven grades of primary and middle school. Most students in China take a mimimum of two years of English. Japanese, Russian and French are available at most schools.

Most of the facts related to education can be summarized by the emphasis in higher education to increase enrollment by 42%. This means that 1.5 million students will graduate from College and Universities between 1981 and 1986.

Economics in the PRC are changing rapidly. By the year 2000 plans are to quadruple the industrial and agricultural output. Some of the facts are:

1. Projected 7.2% increase in industrial and agricultural growth per year up to the year 2000.
2. GNP is presently 400 billion and will go to 1.4 trillion by the year 2000.
3. Many industrial and agricultural production figures are comparable to those

of the present super powers' in the past 20 years.

4. China has nearly every necessary industry and agricultural commodity necessary for domestic and export growth and development. i.e, there are 400,000 industrial and transportation enterprises.
5. Chief targets of the 6th Fifth Year Plan (1981-1986) are:
    a. agricultural production growth.
    b. energy and transportation developments.
    c. increase in educational and scientific training for economic development.
6. 13% average annual increase for education and science in the present five year plan.
7. 4.9% average annual increase in payroll in the present five year plan.
8. Primary Industrial and Agricultural gains over the past five year plan are as follows: 12.3 % grain, 33% cotton, 20.4% electricity and 5.1% steel.

China's present moderate governmental leaders are concerned with increasing education and training at all grade levels, especially when related to industrial and agricultural growth. By the year 2000 the People's Republic of China may well be the next superpower.

In conclusion, the basic trends in January 1983 were: 1) a progressive moderate government; 2) increased freedom of movement for foreigners; 3) higher standards of living for the people; 4) improved health and housing conditions; and 5) desire to improve international relations.